FLORA;

OR,

HOB IN THE WELL.

A

FARCE.

TAKEN FROM THE

MANAGER'S BOOK,

AT THE

Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

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MDCCLXXXVII.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Hob - -	Mr Ryder.
Friendly - -	Mr. Davies.
Sir Thomas Testy -	Mr. Fearon.
Dick - -	Mr. Brown.
Old Hob - -	Mr. Booth.

WOMEN.

Flora - -	Mrs. Martyr.
Hob's Mother -	Mrs. Pitt.
Betty - -	Miss Stuart.

FLORA; *or*, Hob in the Well.

ACT I.

SCENE I. Flora *and* Betty *discovered.*

Flora. BETTY——

Bet. Madam.

Flo. It's a ſad life I lead here.

Bet. Life indeed, Madam, is a ſad thing any where to lovers that are uncoupled.

Flo. Wert thou ever in love, Betty?

Bet. O moſt cruelly, Madam; but the man I loved had another more darling miſtreſs—called Claret—for whoſe ſweet ſociety I was forſaken.

Flo. And how do you find yourſelf now?

Bet. As moſt folks are, after the loſs of an old lover.

Flo. How's that?

Bet. Ready for a new one?

Flo. Wou'd I were of thy humour—But my ſilly heart's ſo ſet upon Mr. Friendly, that all mankind beſide are no more than my own ſex to me.

Bet. Then you muſt have him, Madam, or you'll go into a conſumption.

Flo. Ay, but how ſhall I come at him, Betty?

Bet. Why run a riſque, Madam.

Flo. What riſque?

Bet. Run away with him.

Flo. Pſha! how is that poſſible, when my uncle locks me up as if I were his only bottle of brandy?

Bet. You know, Madam, I have ſometimes the keys of both in my keeping—and if you pleaſe to uncork your conſcience I'll undertake, in eight and forty hours, Mr. Friendly ſhall have at leaſt half a dozen godowns of you

Flo. Ah, Betty! I'm afraid you flatter me.

Bet. Nay, Madam, you are as good a judge of that as I; for you muſt own, he has a very promiſing perſon.

Flo. Pſha! I don't think of his perſon.

Bet. If any other woman thought half ſo much of it, you would pull her commode for her.

Flo. Pooh! but I mean I am afraid you are not ſincere in your advice, and that if I ſhould truſt you with any deſign of that nature, you would diſcover it to my uncle.

Bet. Ah! but if I were to live with you, and have my wages raiſed, after you are married—I know whoſe ſuſpicion does me a great deal of wrong.

Flo. Swear then to be true, and I will truſt you. But, dear Betty, be out of the faſhion for once, and keep your oath. I will tell you why I ſo earneſtly entreat you.

Flo.

Flo. *Cuſtom prevailing ſo long 'mongſt the great,*
Makes oaths eaſy potions to ſle p on,
Which many (on gaining good places) repeat,
Without e'er deſigning to keep one.
For an oath's ſeldom kept as a virgin's fair fame,
A lover's fond vows, or a p elate's good name;
A lawyer to truth, a ſtateſman from blame;
Or a patriot heart in a courtier.

Bet Here then I ſwear, by all my hopes and perquiſites, by the ſweet profits of my place in view, and double wages in reverſion; by your laced ſhoes too big, and thoſe too little; by the ſilk gown you'll give me at your wedding; by all your mantuas, heads, hoops, ſhort hoods and cloaks, and as I hope your laſt blue atlas never will be worn again; I ſwear——

Flo. That you will inviolably keep my ſecrets, and aſſiſt me to your utmoſt, in running away with Mr. Friendly.

Bet. I ſwear.

Flo. Then I will truſt you; and when I'm married, Betty, every article of your oath ſhall be made good to you——Look here, then, here's a letter I had juſt written to Mr. Friendly, wherein I've promiſed, at twelve o'clock to night, to be upon the mount in the garden; and if he will take care to meet me on t'other ſide, and ſet a ladder againſt the wall, I'll toſs over my band-box, venture catching cold in the dew, and take my fortune with him.

Bet. There's metal in the propoſal, Madam —Let's ſee the letter, he ſhall have it in a quarter of an hour, though I carry it myſelf.

Flo. But I wont venture neither, unleſs his anſwer tells he'll be ready—So, dear Betty, be careful, I have no mortal to truſt but thee.

Bet. And no mortal fitter to be truſted.

[*Exit.*

Flo. So, now my heart's at eaſe——I find my reſolution's good at the bottom; and ſince I have ſet my head upon running away, 'tis not my old uncle, nor the garden-wall, ſhall ſtop me, though he were as wiſe as a biſhop, and the wall as high as a church-ſteeple.

Enter Sir Thomas Teſty.

Sir Tho. How now, Mrs. Irreverence! Am I ſuch a hobgoblin, that you ſtart at the ſight of me?

Flo Sir, I did not think any harm; but when you come upon one unawares——

Sir Tho. Unawares! What, I ſurprized you then? Your head was full of other matters, which, I ſuppoſe, that cloſe committee of the fleſh and the devil have abſolutely reſolved to be the fundamentals of your conſtitution.

Flo. Lord, Sir! how ſtrangely you talk to one!

Sir Tho. Talk, you malapert! why who ſhould talk to you but I? Who am I? Huſſey! Who am I?

Flo You are my uncle by relation, my guardian by my father's will, and my jailer againſt mine.

Sir Tho.

Sir Tho. Then while you are my priſoner, huſſey, how dare you take ſuch liberty?

Flo. Becauſe liberty, Sir, is the ſweeteſt thing a priſoner can take.

Sir Tho. Don't you think in your conſcience now, miſtreſs, you deſerve to be locked up?

Flo. I think in my conſcience you ought to let me marry, ſince I have a mind to't.

Sir Tho. Provoking! Dare you own this to my face?

Flo. Why, Sir, is't a fault? You have kept me in priſon for theſe ten months, and I did not know but my confeſſing it might deſerve a litrle of your mercy.

Sir Tho. Aſtoniſhing! The devil has hardened you, huſſey! you are a ſight! Go, go to your chamber, people will ſtare at you. I would not have you ſeen abroad in this condition for—O Lurd! your brain's turned! You ſhall bleed, miſtreſs: I'll have your room darkened. Water-gruel, diſcipline and water-gruel, ye Gods!

Flo. Look'e, uncle, I find you have a mind to drive me to a hard bargain; therefore, to let you ſee that I am no hagler, I'll make you an offer which ſhall fairly come up to the moſt you can make of me—as thus——

Sir Tho. What new diſtraction haſt thou got in thy head now?

Flo. Hear me. You know I have 8000l. to my fortune; and that, by my father's will, you are to be allowed the whole intereſt of it, till I am either married or of age, to re-imburſe your expences in maintaining me;

which

which ſaid maintenance, by a modeſt computation, may ſtand you in—Let me ſee—— About ſeven or eight pounds a year (for I've had no cloaths but my mother's)—Now, Sir, if you'll immediately give me the liberty of marrying the man I have a mind to, I'll engage he ſhall conſent to the throwing of my fortune into the public funds, the minute you throw me into his arms. So you ſhall have the uſe of my pence till I am of age, as a premium for advancing to him the uſe of my perſon.

Sir Tho. Hum! The girl begins to talk ſenſibly——But it is not yet proper to underſtand her.—Look'e, child, when you have perſuaded your lover to make the ſame propoſal under his hand, I ſhall then believe you are equally mad to come at one another—In the mean time, let me adviſe you to your chamber, from whence I will allow you the lovely proſpect of the garden. [*Exit.*

Flo. You may chance to fret for this, my very wiſe uncle. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Enter Friendly *and* Servant.

Friend. What a watchful old rogue is this!

Serv A very dragon, Sir.

Friend. To uſe a young creature ſo unmercifully.

Serv. Nay, Sir, ſo uncivilly.

Friend. How, ſirrah?

Serv.

Serv. To force her to ſuch extremities, to make her ſtraddle over a great wall, and riſk her neck down a ladder at midnight, when he ought to lend her his hand into a coach and ſix out of his great gate at noon day, to come to you, Sir. But the raſcal has no breeding!

Friend. By Mercury, I will be even with him!

Serv. You have reaſon, Sir, for though I ſay it———

Friend. That ſhould not ſay it.

Serv. She is a lovely piece of temptation, Sir.

Friend. What's o'clock, ſirrah?

Serv. By the moon's riſing, I believe it may be about—about a——paſt ten.

Friend. Then, ſirrah, about paſt twelve ——

Serv. You'll have one of her blue ſilk ſtockings ſtraddling over the wall, Sir——

At paſt twelve o'clock, and a fine ſummer's morning,
When all in the village ſleep pleaſantly,
Cynthia's *bright beams, all nature adorning,*
Shall guide my ſwift ſteps to my lovely ſhe.
Then my Flora, *fraught with kind wiſhes,*
I'll fold in my arms, with amorous kiſſes,
Which ſerve as preludes to more ſolia bliſſes—
Soon as the vicar has made us one.

Friend. But where's the country fellow you promiſed ſhould carry my anſwer to her letter?

Serv.

Serv. Who, Hob, Sir? Here he is; and if any ſuſpects his face for a pimp's, I have no ſkill in the ſcience, Sir.

Enter Hob.

Friend. Well, Hob, canſt thou carry this letter to Sir Thomas Teſty's houſe for me?

Hob. Yes, Zir, yes.

Friend. Do ſo, and give it to Madam Flora; but take care nobody ſees you deliver it.

Hob. Yes, Zir—but muſt I carry it to-night?—'Tis main dark.

Friend. You muſt go immediately.

Hob. I hope, Zir, there's no difference between you and Zir Tomas.

Friend. Why do'ſt hope ſo?

Hob. Why truly, Zir, I do hear there be; and therefore I don't care to meddle or make between friends, for 'tis but an unthankful office; and you know Zir Tomas is v ry cruſty: and if he do's but ſuſpect that I ſhau'd conzarn myzel, maphap he may take the law of me; and you knaw, Zir, that law is a vrightful thing.

The terrible law, when it faſtens its paw
On a poor man, it gripes till he's undone;
And what I am doing, may turn to my ruin,
Tho' rich as the Lord Mayor of London.
Therefore I'll be wary what meſſage I carry,
Unleſs we firſt make a zure bargain;
I will be dempnify'd, thoroughly zatisfy'd
That ch'am ſhan't zuffer a varding.

Friend.

Friend. Piſh! the law ſhall never trouble thee; I'll ſecure thee from any harm.

Hob. Very well, Zir, very well; that's as much as I can deſire. But pray don't take unkindly what I zay; for you know no man is willing to bring himſel into a primunire if he con help it.

Friend. No, no——Pr'ythee be gone.

Hob. I will, Zir, I will——for——for——Pray, Zir, be pleaſed to read the zubſcription for me.

Friend. S'Death! how am I tortured with this fooliſh fellow! and I can ſend nobody elſe without being ſuſpected——Don't trouble thyſelf with the ſuperſcription, but deliver it as I bid thee.

Hob. Very good, Zir, very good——'Tis main dark——Would it not do as well, Zir, if I ſhould carry it in the morning? Had rather go in the morning.

Friend. Why ſo?

Hob. Why, truly, Zir, I'll tell you: at the lower end of Zir Tomas's orchard, one of our poor neighbours being in a diſparaging condition, has gone and hang'd himzel——Now there is zome do zay that he walks by night in zeveral zorts of ſhapes.

Friend. What! and ſo you are afraid, are you?

Hob. No, indeed, Sir, ch'am not afraid, ——I thank marcy, I defy the devil and all his works.

Friend. A pox on thee then, get thee gone!

Hob.

Hob. Though I muſt tell yon, I have a great concait he will appear to me———vor you muſt knaw, to-morrow the crowner's queſt is to zit upon him, whereof, d'ye zee, I'm to be one; and who knows but he may have zomething upon his ſpirits that may make him break his mind to me; and if zo, let me tell you, I'm afraid it will make a bad day for zomebody———vor if Zir Tomas had kept his fences whole, mayhap this man had never been tempted to ha' gone into his ground to ha' hanged himzel. But be that as it will, I'll do your buſineſs vor you; therefore pray take you no care, Zir———

Friend. Pr'ythee, about it then.

Hob. Ay, ay, I'll warrant you; don't trouble yourzel no vurder—vor if I zay I'll do't, I'll do't, that's my humour. Did not maiſter Dick recommend me to you, maiſter Friendly?

Friend. Yes. What then?

Hob. Ay, ay, he knew very well what he was about—there is zome of our boys here in town, that would ſtand prating and prating half an hour, and not do your buſineſs; but I'm a mon that makes few words, and ſo—

Friend. Get thee gone. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir Thomas *and* Servants.

Sir Tho. 'Twill be a hard matter to ſink any of the principal, indeed; ſo that, could the girl make good the propoſal, I would not care how ſoon ſhe were kiſſed black in the face; but ſhould I give her the leaſt liberty upon it,

it

it is poſſible when ſhe has made uſe on it, her conſcience might deſire to be off. And I dare ſwear her lover will ſpare neither care nor coſt to come at her without my conſent; and gold in particular has a prevailing influence in a love affair, therefore I muſt watch my ward myſelf—ſervan s may be corrupted.—D'ye hear, raſcals! look ſharp, for this is the uſual hour that your ſoft ſighing rogues run a cat rwauling.

Serv. Sir! Sir! yonder's ſomebody with a light coming down the field.

Sir Tho. Stand ſtill, then, and obſerve.

Enter Hob, *whiſtling.*

Hob. Zo, this is the houſe—now let me zee—how ſhall I go about to do this zame buſineſs—If that old fox, Zir Tomas, ſhould ſpy me, he'd maul me vor zartain—But let me alone, I'll be cunning enough vor him, I'll warrant ye—If he zees me, he muſt have more eyes than two.——Hold, hold; now let me zee vor this ſame letter—O, here it is! ——For Madam Flo——— Flo—— Madam Flora.

Sir Tho. Where are you carrying this letter, friend? [Sir Tho. *ſnatching it.*

Hob. Letter, Zir?

Sir Tho. Letter, Sir! ay, letter, Sir! Who did you bring it from?

Hob. Bring it vrom, Zir! I brought it vrom nobody, not I.

Sir *Tho.* How came you by it?

Hob. Buy it, Zir! I did not buy it: why I vound it in my pocket, Zir.

Sir *Tho.* Found it in your pocket!—What did it grow there then? Ha! Where are you going with it?

Hob. Going with it, Zir! I dan't knaw where ch'am going with it, not I.

Sir *Tho.* What do you do here at this time o'night?

Hob. I can't tell what I do here, not I—— I'll go home, Zir, if you pleaſe—I wiſh you a good night.

Sir *Tho.* Hold, hold a little friend, let me reward you firſt for bringing me, however.

Hob. Not a varthing, Zir; indeed, I muſt not take one varthing, for Maiſter Friendly charged me to the contrary; therefore, pray dan't offer it.

Sir *Tho.* Oh, did he ſo! but ſomething I will give you however: pray take that—and that, ſirrah. [*beats him.*

Hob. O Lard! O Lard! What do you ſtrik'n vor? avore Gad, I'll take the law of you, zee an I don't—what do you go to murder me?

Sir *Tho.* I'll law you, you rogue —— are you their letter-carrier? — Here's more for you, ſirrah.

Hob. Bear witneſs, bear witneſs; ze an ye dan't pay for this! O Lard! O Lard!

Sir *Tho* Here, ſirrahs, lay hold of him till I examine the letter. Let's ſee—To Mrs. Flora—right.

" The

"The propoſal you mention, in caſes of extremity, will certainly do; but it will be a much pleaſanter piece of juſtice to bite him for his barbarity. (A ſon of a whore! he means me to be ſure.) The ladder and all things ſhall be ready exactly at twelve to-night. (Oons!) If you have any thing further of moment, this fellow is honeſt, and will convey it ſafe to your eternal lover,

Tom Friendly."

Yes, yes, I find he is honeſt, with a pox to him, and I'll reward him accordingly.—Here, deſire that honeſt gentleman to walk down to the bottom of that well—and let him ſtay there till I call for him.

Hob. I con't do it, as I hope to be ſaved I con't; pray vorbear, and don't murder an innocent man! *(Falls on his knees.*

I never till now was conzarned in ſtrife;
Have mercy, Sir Tomas, *and ſpare poor* Hob's *life,*
And give me my vreedom, as I had bevore—
I'll be a good boy, and I'll do zo no more:
Indeed I won't——

Sir *Tho.* In with him, I ſay——

Hob. O Lard! Maſter Jonathan, I vorewarn ye, dan't ye be conzarn'd in this: conzider what you do.

Sir *Tho* Oons! in with him.

Hob. You are all principals, there are no 'compliſhes in murder. Help! Murder!

[*They put him down.*

SCENE III *A Chamber.*

Enter Flora.

Flo. I heard a ſtrange noiſe without; I wiſh things go as they ſhould—My heart beats, as if Mr. What d'ye call 'em were in my arms. —Well, this love's a terrible thing—Would the worſt on't were over. I'm afraid I ſhall never be able to go through with it—I am ſure here's an odd buſtle about it—How now!

Enter Betty.

Bet. Undone! undone! Madam, your uncle has intercepted Mr. Friendly's letter in anſwer to your, and all your deſign's diſcovered: he raves and tears like a madman, and in his paſſion has thrown the poor fellow that brought it into the great well—and ſwears, if any body offers to help him out, without his order, he'll throw them in after him.

Flo. Well, if I am here alive, I thought it would come to nothing; it vexes the heart of me.

Bet. But come, Madam, don't be wholly diſcouraged; for John tells me, 'tis a hundred to one but the fellow's drown'd.

Flo. Pſhaw! I with my uncle was drowned in his room.

Bet No, Madam, but he'll be hanged, and that's as well.

Flo.

Flo. Do you really think ſo?

Bet. Poz.

Flo. Then I'll marry in ſpite of his teeth.

Bet. Right, when he is in one nooſe, you may ſlip into t'other.

Flo Dear Betty, ſtep out and ſee how it is with the fellow, for I'm in a thouſand frights; and if things are—you know how—aſk when the aſſizes begin. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The Well.*

Enter Old Hob *and his* Wife.

O. Hob. Come, wife, never trouble thy zelf, a wull go a rawging ſometimes, and there's an end on't. He wull come home again, I warrant un.

Wife. I think o'my conſcience it's no great matter whether he does or no—A baſe raugue, to be out of the way at ſuch a buſy time as thick is! The zun has been up this hour and quarter, and that grauceleſs boy, I warrant, has not been a bed yet; pr'ythee, huſband, ſtep and zee, an he be'nt zotting at the Park-gate, and I'll draw th' water in the mean time.

O. Hob. Do you then. [*Exit.*

Wife This boy's the plague of my life, I think—'twere more than time the gammon had been boiled by now. And then the volk will come to the wake bevore it be cold—and then it waun't be vit to be eaten—a jacka-

napes! when I bid en, and beg en, and pray-ed en to ſtay, and he would go—and yet, notwithſtanding all I have zaid, could I lay eyes on him, I ſhould forget his roguery, and vorgive en.

Here have I been blaming the poor boy for not minding his buſineſs, and at the ſame time neglect my own. I muſt haſte to wind up the bucket, or I ſhall have huſband back bevore I've drawn a drop of water.

[*Goes to the well, and ſings*, Did you not hear, *&c.*

Lud! Lud! 'Tis main heavy———Heyday! ———I believe old Nick's in the bottom o'the bucket, for my part. [Hob *cries out.*] Oh, a ghoſt! a ghoſt!

[Hob *appears in the bucket, and ſhe lets the rope go, and he ſinks again.*

Enter Old Hob.

O. Hob. Heyday! what's the matter with a murrain t'ye? Is the woman in her tantrums?

Wife. A ghoſt! a ghoſt! ——— Hob's ghoſt in the well———Ah———

O. Hob. The woman's turn'd vool, I think, —let me zee; if the devil be in the well I'll tetch en out on't—here's a rout indeed—Wauns! I think the devil be in the bucket—But now I have got en half way, I'll knaw what zort of a devil 'tis; and if he be'nt a zivil one, I'll zouze en and zop en in the bottom agen.

Y. Hob.

Y. Hob. Ah! hau'd vaſt, vather, 'tis I! 'tis I!

Wife. Ah! 'tis there agen.

O. Hob. Hau'd your peace, I zay, the devil can't get in a word for you, I think——— Who's there? Hob?

Y. Hob. Ay, vor love's zake, pull away, vather.

O. Hob. Pr'ythee, lend's thy hond, wife— Bleſs my eyes! 'tis Hob indeed—What in the name of wonder doſt thou here, lad?

Y. Hob. Ah! dan't 'e aſk queſtions now, vather—get u e home—Zir Tomas has don't; but if there be law in all the king's kingdom, I'll capias en vor zartain. I dan't knaw but it may prove the death of me: I'll zue him next hizi-prizis an't coſt me vorty ſhillings. I'll zue him, come on't what will—Zee if I don't make him pay vor't.

Wife. *Oh, my poor boy!*
O. Hob. *His looks are ſtark wild!*
Wife. *Could* Sir Thomas *deſt oy*
O. Hob. *So hopeful a child!*
Y. Hob. *I'll revenge if I can.*
Wife. *Ah! talk ſo no more.*
O. Hob. *He's a great man,*
O. Hob *and* Wife. *And we are but poor.*
Y. Hob. *All you do zay can zignify nothing:*
I'll capias en vor't let it coſt what it will.
Wife. *Go to-bed, boy, whilſt I get thee dry cloathing.*
O. Hob. *Think thou art taught to return good for ill?*

Y. Hob.

Y. Hob. *I'll indict en i'th' crown,*
And bind o'er to the ſeſſion,
Tho'ſ I zell my heifer, and the old mare,
Udſblead, I'd hang en or drown en.
O. Hob. ——— *Vorbear zuch expreſſions.*
Wife. *I pr'ythee vorgive, and be not zevere.*
Y. Hob. *I'll never vorgive, and will be zevere.*

Wife. Oh, poor Hob!—Come along, child, and I'll get thee a little zugar-zops to comfort thy bowels.

Hob. Oh, mother, mother!

Hob's Mother. What do'ſt ſay, boy?

Hob. Don't you remember what my father uſed to ſay of me?

Mother What, my dear?

Hob. He ſaid I was too pratty a boy to live long. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Chamber.*

Enter Sir Thomas *and* Servant.

Sir Tho. JOHN, what's become of the fellow that fell into the well laſt night? Has any body taken care of him?

Serv. No, Sir; your worſhip ſaid he ſhould lie there till your worſhip was pleaſed to call for him—

Sir Tho. Oons, ſirrah! you have not drowned the fellow, have you?

Serv. Who, I drown him, Sir? Nay, nay, hau'd yee, I am but a ſervant, and 'twas you bade me; an any miſchief ſhould come on't, 'tis you muſt anſwer it—fleſh! what have I to do with it?

Sir *Tho.* You impudent rogue! would you put your villainies upon me? Did no I ſee you collar him? Did not you lay violent hands upon him, ſirrah, and am not I witneſs againſt you?

Serv. Lard! Lard! at this rate, a man had as good be a galley-ſlave, as a ſervant—If one don't do as one's bid, one's head's broke; and if one does, one's to be hanged for it; but come what will, the gallows will hold two—that's the beſt on't.

Sir *Tho.* He ſays true, faith—Well, well, keep your own counſel, ſirrah, and I'll ſee what I can do to ſave you.

Serv.

Serv. Nay, nay, as for that, do you ſee, do as you ſee cauſe—let it go thick way, or let it go thack way, 'tis all a caſe to me, go which way it will, one good turn will require another.

Sir *Tho.* Hold your peace, ſirrah, and be gone. [*Exit* Servant.]—This ſurly dog is not to be frighted, I ſee. I muſt (as is cuſtomary with a man in power) protect this fellow in his roguery for my own ſake.

Enter Servant *with a Letter.*

Serv. Sir, here's a letter for you.
Sir *Tho.* Who brought it?
Serv. Mr. Friendly's man, Sir.
Sir *Tho.* Let's ſee!

(Reads)

"Sir, your niece informs me that ſhe has made you a propoſal concerning our marriage, which I am willing to ratify whenever you will pleaſe to do me the honour of a meeting.

Yours."

Humph! that meeting may be to meet with my niece, for aught I know—I muſt have the particulars under his hand before I ſeem to underſtand him: therefore, that I don't underſtand him ſhall be my anſwer.—In the mean time I'll put on a ſmoother look to the girl, and ſhew her a little of the country diverſion from the mount in the garden; and if they

are

are in earneſt, that good-humour will work her to work him up to my price———Bid the fellow ſtay till I write him an anſwer.

SCENE II. *The Wood and Garden wall.*

Enter Old Hob *and* Wife.

Wife. Come, huſband, now the boy has got on his dry clothes, let him be ſtirring a-bit———Come, come, make haſte, the town will be vul of volk bevore we ſhall get vit-ted.

O. Hob. Don't trouble thy zelf, wife; every thing within doors is ready, and there is nothing wanting but the zign to be put up—and look ye, that ſhall be done preſent——— Hob! Hob!

Hob within. What zay you, vather?

O. Hob. Tap the ale———quick, quick.

Hob within. Ay, ay, vather.

O. Hob. There—now he that will drink good ale, let him come to the zign of the ſo-lid———Come, wife, let's to our buſineſs within. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Friendly *diſguiſed*, Servant, *and Country People.*

Friend. If this diſguiſe does not conceal me———

Serv. You'll then be out of countenance to no purpoſe, Sir—But pray, Sir, what do you propoſe by turning ballad-ſinger?

Friend.

Friend. I do propoſe, that Flora ſhall know me by my voice, and that conſequently her wits will ſoon be at work to come at me.

Serv. Well, Sir, but of what uſe can I be? for I can no more ſing than I can faſt.

Friend. But you can help to draw other gaping fools about me.

Serv. There's ſome ſenſe in that indeed, Sir.

Enter Sir Thomas, Flora, *and* Betty.

Sir *Tho.* Come, niece, if you muſt ſee the paſtime, you may have as fair a proſpect of it here as in the crowd.

Flora. I like it very well here, Sir.

Friend. Well, ho! this ſame is entitled, an excellent new ballad, in praiſe of the Country Wake.

Sir *Tho.* Hark! we ſhall have a merry ballad.

Flora. Bleſs my eyes!——Is not that he, Betty?

Betty. The very he, Madam——but, huſh!

SONG.

SONG.

By FRIENDLY.

I.

I'll ſing you a ditty, and warrant it true,
Give but attention unto me awhile,
Of tranſactions at Court, and in country too;
Toilſome pleaſures, and pleaſing toil.
Accept it, I pray, as your help-mates you take,
To ſome 'twill give joy,
And ſome others anroy,
All's fair at a country-wake, All's fair, &c.

II.

'At courts we ſee patriots noble and juſt,
'Fit for employments of honour and power;
'But then there are ſycophants, unfit for truſt,
'Blend with the great, and in number are more;
'Slaves, who would honour and honeſty ſtake,
'With ſordid invention
'To get place or penſion;
'Strange news at a country-wake, Strange news,' &c.

III.

Some ladies at Court are ſtil'd unpolite,
Becauſe truly virtuous, and prone to no ill;
Whilſt others, who ſparkle in diamonds bright,
Are ſtript of their pride at baſſet or quadrille,
Till their loſſes at play do their lo'ds credit ſhake;
Then their toys to recover,
They'll grant the laſt favour;
Strange news at a coun:ry wake, Strange news,
&c.

IV.

Here moſt of our gentlemen patriots are,
Though very bad ſtateſmen, I freely confeſs;
They deſign harm to none—but a fox or a hare,
And are always found loyal in war and in peace.
The farmer's induſtry doth earth fertile make;
The huſbandman's plowing,
His planting and ſowing,
Gets health and good cheer at a country-wake.
Gets, &c.

V.

Our girls blooming fair, without waſhes or paints,
From neighbouring villages hither reſort;
They

They kiſs ſweet as roſes, yet virtuous as ſaints,
(Who can ſay more for the ladies at Court)
No worldly cares vex 'em aſleep or awake,
But their time they improve.
In peace and true love,
And innocent mirth, at the country-wake. And,
&c.

VI.

The ſchemes of a courtier are full of intrigue;
Here's all fair and open, dark deeds we deſpiſe:
Set rural contentment 'gainſt courtly fatigue,
Who chooſes the former is happy and wiſe.
Now let's pray for the King, and for England's
ſake,
From all faction free,
May his ſubjects agree,
As well at the Court as the Country-Wake. As,
&c.

Do you think ſhe knew me?

Serv. Knew you, Sir! why I bought one of your ballads for her, and ſhe tipped the wink upon me, with as much as to ſay—Deſire him not to go till he hears from me.——— Suppoſe, Sir, you took a cup of nappy here, to paſs away the time a little.

Friend. Call for what you have a mind to

Serv. Here, houſe!———

Enter Hob.

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming.—— Your zarvant, Maiſter Friendly, I am glad to zee you, you are welcome to the vair.

Friend. I thank you, honeſt Hob.

Hob. I ſhau'd knaw that gentlemon—— Maiſter Richard, I think.

Serv. Ay, Hob; how do'ſt do?

Hob. O Laird, maiſter! how d'ye do?— Come, pray zit down ——Maiſter Friendly, come, pray ſtay, and drink one pot avore you go.

Friend. Sit down, or this fellow's impertinence will make us obſerved.——What do'ſt thou do with an apron on, Hob?

Hob. Adod, I put'n on but juſt now; vather will do as neighbours do, and every one i'th town almoſt zells ale on vair day—But now we zells every other zorts of liquors, and wine too, an occaſion be.

Friend. Wine!

Hob. Ay, all zorts of wine.

Friend. Say'ſt thou ſo? Bring us ſome claret then.

Hob. Claret, Zir! We have no claret, we mun not zell claret, 'tis againſt the law—— Now you may ha' ſome o' your port, your red port now, or your white port, or ſuch zort of ſtuff.

Friend. Such ſtuff as thou haſt, then, pr'ythee bring us.

Hob.

Hob. Yes, Zir—Ch'am coming——Now in my mind, Zir, what do you think of a little zack? a little zack now, and zome o'your zugar in it is main good.

Friend. Pr'ythee, bring what thou likeſt beſt thyſelf, for I am ſure it will pleaſe no palate but thy own. [*Exit* Hob.

Serv. Sir, with humble ſubmiſſion, I do not yet diſcover any great hopes from this ſame project of yours. Pray, Sir, how do you propoſe to come at the lady?

Friend. While the garden door's ſhut, and that old dragon is ſo watchful of the fruit, there are but little hopes indeed. However, I won't quit the place; Fortune may yet do ſomething unexpectedly to befriend me.

Enter Hob, *with Pots, Tobacco, Bread, Cheeſe, and Sugar.*

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming.——Here, Zir———

Friend. Where's the ſack, Hob?

Hob. Zack, Zir! Odd, I dan't knaw, I thought you zaid you had rather have ale.—Ale is indeed much wholeſomer for your Engliſh ſtomachs—For my p rt, I'd rather have ale, now.—Maiſter Richard, but a bit avore you drink; come, and in the mean time I'll put a little zugar in the ale, and make it as good as I con for you.—Come, Zir, againſt you're diſpos'd.

Friend. Thank you, Hob——This fellow's kindneſs will poiſon me.

Serv. Not at his rate of taſting, Sir, for he has not left a drop at the bottom. [*Aſide.*

Hob. Adod, 'tis main good, Zir.—Will you have t'other pot, Zir?

Friend. No; pr'ythee, drink this too, and then fetch us a couple.

Hob. Yes, Zir, I will.—Ch'am coming—→ [*Exit* Hob.

Sir Tho Come, my merry countrymen, every man take his laſs, and give us a dance or two, and then we'll have the cudgels out.

Count. Yes, an't like your worſhip, we are all ready.—Come, ſcratch, ſtrike up.

[*Dance.*

Enter Hob.

Hob. Ay, marry, Zir!———Well done, Ralph——Zet to un, Joan, zet to un.——

Wife within. Hob! Hob!

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming——— *Toll loll.*

O. Hob within. Hob! Hob!

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming.—— What a plague ails vather, trow! An old vool!——Udſblead, he makes more a noiſe—Set too, now, William—Ah, rarely done!—In, Mary! ah, dainty Mary!—Turn her about, John—Now, now! a murrain!—— You're quite out.——Look, Ralph ſhould ha' caſt off, and while John had turned Mary about, Tomas ſhould ha' led up Nan, and Joan met Ralph at bottom agen; mean while, John ſhould have ſided with Mary, and then

Mary

Mary ſhou'd back to back with Ralph, and then Tomas had come in again, in his own place, and ſo all had been right—Come, begin again.—Strike up, ſcratch.—*Toll loll.*

O. Hob within. Hob! Hob! Where be ye?

Hob. Ch'am coming, ch'am coming.—What a devil, can't you be quiet a-bit?—*Toil loll.*

Ente. Old Hob.

O. Hob. Hey-day! Hey-day! This is rare ſport. Udſblead, I'll ſtrap you, you baſe rawg ye—Muſt you be dauncing here, and your mother and I at work? [*Strikes him.*

Hob. Hey-day! What's the matter now?—What, muſt I be beat all days o' my life?

O. Hob. You graceleſs rawg, mind your buſineſs then, do: yonder's your poor mother within, a ſcawring, and ſcawring till ſhe ſweats again, and nobody to draw one drop of beer.

Hob. I don't care a varthing; I won't draw a drop more, if you go to that. Do your worſt, and take your courſe.

O. Hob. Sirrah, come in, and dan't ſtand dauncing here, dan't ye.

Hob. I won't go in, zo I won't, if that trouble ye, I will daunce, and daunce agen. *Toll loll loll*——

[*Throws the drink in his face.*

O. Hob. Ah! thou art an untoward boy as e'er was born. Marcy forgive me for begetting thee! [*Exit* O. Hob.

Hob.

Hob to Friend. Did not I give him a fine dowſing?

Friend. Ay, ay, you are a hopeful lad.

Hob. Marry come up, what's here to do, I trow!

Count. Here's the cudgels, an't like you; will your worſhip pleaſe to have us begin?

Sir Tho. Ay, ay, by all means.—Make haſte, Roger, and bring forth the hat and favour.

Roger. Here 'tis, an't pleaſe you.

Sir Tho. Hang it up there and he that wins it, let him wear it.—The firſt Somerſetſhire man that breaks a head, here's half-a-crown for him to drink; and he that breaks that rogue Hob's head, ſhall have another.

Hob. Shall he? Look ye, he that breaks my head ſhall ha' zomewhat to do, I'll tell you that—Let'n be who he will, he ſhall earn his money: ecod, I'll rib'n; and look ye, to begin, here I'll take up the cudgel——and now let the beſt man here take up the t'other an he dare.——If he be a Zomerzetſhire man, let'n be a Zomerzetſhire man.——I fight for Glouceſterſhire; I don't care who knaws it.

Sir Tho. At him, at him there!—What is there nobody dare venture upon him?——Neighbour Puzzlepate, take up t'other cudgel.

Puz. Not I, an't pleaſe you, I have enough of 'en already; he broke my head but laſt week.

Sir Tho.

Sir Tho. Roger—Sirrah, do you take up t'other cudgel, and thraſh him, d'ye hear, thraſh him ſoundly, ſirrah.

Rog. I can't promiſe that, Sir; I will do my beſt; I'll break his head if I can, in love; and if he breaks mine, much good may do him.

Friend. So! if Hob does but get the better of the combat, the teſty knight will certainly be provoked to come down, and then we ſhall have ſport.——Dick, help to encourage him.

Serv. Well ſaid, Hob! O brave Hob!—Now for Glouceſterſhire, Hob!

Hob. I warrant ye, maiſter, let me alone.

Friend. Here, Hob, there's an angel for thee, and if thou breakeſt his head, I will give thee another.

Hob. Don't ye vear, maiſter, ecod I will noint en.

Rog. Do, if thou canſt——I don't fear thee, Hob.

Hob. 'ɔblead, I'll dreſs thy jacket, I'll dowſe thy Zomerzetſhire coat for thee.

Rog. Will you? Come on.

Serv. O brave Hob!

All. O brave Roger!——Huzza!

[Hob *breaks his head, takes down the hat and favour, puts it on, and ſtruts about.*

Hob. Ecod, I have don't — I've don't, ſaith.

Sir Tho.

Sir Tho. Foul, foul, foul.

Hob. Fair, fair, fair.

Sir Tho. You lie, you dog, 'twas foul.

All. Huzza!

Friend. Stand upon your guard, Hob, the Knight's coming down.

Hob. Is he? Let en come and welcome, here I'll ſtand; I'll take no other than St. George's guard. If he lets dr.ve at me, vore-gad, I'll hit en over tl e ſconce, an he were a knight of gold.

Sir Tho. Where are theſe bumkins? Now, who ſays 'tis fair? I ſay, 'tis foul.

Hob. I ſay, 'tis fair.

[Sir Thomas *endeavouring to come at* Hob *is held by the country people.*

Hob. A zword! [*Exit running.*

Friend. to Flo. Now, now, dear creature, if ever you would redeem yourſelf or me from eternal bondage, be kind, and fly into the arms of liberty.

Flo. What would you have me do?

Friend. Madam, your uncle has left the garden door open; there's no mortal now to oppoſe your flight——Scout——Scout, you dog, and ſee that the enemy don't rally upon us.

Serv Ay, ay, Sir. [*Exit* Servant.

Flo. Ah, but conſider, if my uncle ſhould ſurpriſe me.

Bet. Conſider, the door's open, Madam.

Friend. Nothing but delay can ruin us.

Flo. O dear! I'm in a thouſand frights.

Let.

Bet. This is downright provoking! Sir, ſince you ſee there's no hopes of my lady, if you can ſettle the leaſt tip of your heart upon your humble ſervant, I'll be over the wall in a twinkling.

Flo. Hold, hold, rather than you ſhould break your neck, I will venture——Well, here I am, I tremble every joint of me; now, whither will you carry me?

[*They come down.*

Friend. To a doctor that ſhall cure thee of all fears for ever—To the parſon, the parſon, my dear angel.

Flo. O Lurd! but if he ſhould not be at home now.

Bet. What ſhould we do for ſomething to be afraid of?

Exeunt

Enter Sir Thomas.

Sir Tho. There, you ruſtick rogues, you hard-headed dogs, I think I've at laſt met with your ſkulls——I believe I have notched ſome of your noddles for you.——Hey-day! the garden-door open, and my niece gone!—my mind miſgives me conſumedly——Niece!——Betty!——Thieves! Robbery! Murder! Loſt! Not to be found!

Enter Friendly's Servant.

Serv. So, here he is, and I muſt bam him till the buſineſs is over.

Sir *Tho.*

Sir *Tho.* Thieves! thieves!

Serv. Pray, Sir, what's the matter?

Sir *Tho.* Oons, Sir, let me go, or I'll run my ſword into your guts.

Serv. Sir, I'm afraid your brain's ſomething out of order, and therefore 'twill be but a friendly part in me to take care of you.

Sir *Tho.* Blood and thunder! you dog, get out of my way, or I'll—

Serv Nay, then——{*Preſenting a piſtol.*}—Come, Sir, make your thruſt——

Sir *Tho.* What the devil are you?

Serv. A philoſopher; and this ſmall pop is my argument.

Sir *Tho.* Oons, Sir! I believe you're a highwayman, and your pop there is your livelihood.

Serv. Sir, you may be as ſcurrilous as you pleaſe, provided you don't paſs this way.

Sir *Tho.* 'Sdeath, Sir! what buſineſs have you to hinder me?

Serv. Sir, I have no buſineſs at preſent, but to hinder you.

Sir *Tho.* But pray, Sir, how comes it to be your buſineſs?

Serv. Becauſe, Sir, 'tis my buſineſs to do my maſter's buſineſs; and I have ſome modeſt reaſon to believe, that he and the parſon are now doing your niece's buſineſs

Sir *Tho.* The devil! Murder! Where are they, villain?

Serv. Pray, Sir, compoſe yourſelf, for they are here.

Enter

Enter Friendly, Flora, *and* Betty.

Friend. Your bleſſing, Sir?

Serv. Does not that ſhew a ſweet temper in him now, to aſk it of you, that are but his bare uncle?

Sir Tho. I am ſtruck all of a heap, and dumb.

Serv. Come, Sir, don't be as obſtinate as an old covetous father at the end of a comedy; conſider, the main action's over, you had as good be reconciled.

Sir *Tho.* Oons, Sir! I can't be reconciled.

[*Exit* Sir Thomas.

Serv. Go thy ways, like a croſs-grained old fool.

Friend. Let him perſiſt in his obſtinacy; it can be no bar to our happineſs.—You look melancholy, my love.

Flo. I think I've reaſon—You promiſed to carry me to a doctor, that ſhould cure me of my fears. But, on the contrary, I find that the malady increaſes, and is nothing more than the dread of your inconſtancy. I have for ever loſt my uncle's favour, and have now no friend but you——Should you hereafter eſtrange your heart from me, I am wretched indeed.——Reflect on what I've ſaid——excuſe my ſuſpicions—and remember there is no return of ſeaſons in love.

Friend. You ſhall never have cauſe to mention thoſe fears again.

Flo. It is eaſy to talk thus now, but the difficulty will be to ſpeak theſe ſentiments with truth, a year hence. However, as I have run all hazards for you, honour will oblige you to conceal your inconſtancy from me—ſhould you be guilty of it.

Flora. *Let me not diſcover*
In thee a faithleſs lover.
Friend. *I'll never prove a rover,*
But true as a turtle to thee, my dear.
Flora. *Love prompts me to believe thee;*
Do not then deceive me.
Friend. *My conduct ne'er ſhall grieve thee,*
Let this ſuffice; my heart's ſincere.
Flora.—*Let our lives be ſpent*——
Friend.—*In merriment;*
Flora.—*With the ſweet cement*——
Friend.—*Of ſoft content.*
Flora.—*May our joys augment*——
Friend.—*May no dire event*—
Both.——*diſturb our mutual pleaſure.*

FINIS.